
SCOTTISH BORDERS ADULT PROTECTION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT (2014 – 2015)

Report by Chief Social Work Officer

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

31 March 2016

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report informs members of the continuing progress in Scottish Borders in the development of an interagency approach to the support and protection of adults who are at risk of harm (as defined in the Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007).**
- 1.2 The Annual Report (in Appendix 1) covers the activities of the Scottish Borders Adult Protection Committee during the period 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015. The report highlights the continuing work being undertaken in the Scottish Borders in regard to meeting the Council's statutory duties to support and protect adults at risk of harm in the area. This includes information on the Adult Protection Committee and its subcommittees; statistical information collated by the Adult Protection Unit; the operational work undertaken in order to meet the statutory requirements of the Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 Act; and the Learning & Development programme adopted by the Scottish Borders.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Council:-**
- (a) Endorse the Annual Report of the Scottish Borders Adult Protection Committee 2014/15**
 - (b) Agree that it be published on the Council's website and distributed.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The interagency Scottish Borders Adult Protection Committee and the Adult Protection Unit were established in 2005. This is the Tenth Annual Report published, on behalf of the Adult Protection Committee.
- 3.2 The Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 was passed by the Scottish Government in February 2007 and received Royal Assent on 22 March 2007. Part 1 of the Act deals with the protection of adults at risk of harm and was implemented in October 2008. It introduced new measures to protect individuals who fall into the category of 'adults at risk'.

4 ANNUAL REPORT 2014 - 2015

- 4.1 The Annual Report details the range and variety of activity undertaken by the Adult Protection Committee in working together to protect adults at risk in the Scottish Borders, and implement fully the Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.
- 4.2 In order to achieve its objectives, the Adult Protection Committee agreed an 'Interagency Strategy and Plan for Protection of Adults at Risk (2012-2015)' in order to meet the statutory requirements of the Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. There are three subcommittees established in order to help the Adult Protection Committee and the Adult Protection Unit achieve the priorities in the current Interagency Strategy. A new interagency strategy and business plan for 2015 – 2017 is now in place.
- 4.3 A review of Adult Protection activity shows an overall increase in protection concerns since 2008. In 2013 – 2014 there were 1432 referrals received where there was an initial report of an adult at risk of harm. Following initial enquiries this progressed to 169 Adult Protection concerns being investigated where it was known or believed that an adult was at risk as defined by the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. 'Adults at risk' are adults who
- Are unable to safeguard their own well – being, property, rights or other interests
 - Are at risk of harm, and
 - Because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.
- For those referrals that did not meet the above criteria, they did not progress to an Adult Protection concern, as defined above, a significant number were signposted to other services for support.
- 4.4 Under the Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, the Council has a duty to inquire and investigate situations where harm is suspected. The majority of inquiries and investigations are managed through the use of supportive interventions without resorting to the use of Protective Orders available via this Act or other appropriate interventions via the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 or the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000. This is in line with the principles of these Acts and in line with what would be the least restrictive, most beneficial and proportionate response. Most situations are progressed by negotiation and co-operation, and consideration is given to other legal avenues where

appropriate. The sharing of appropriate information between partner agencies has ensured that individuals are suitably protected from harm without unnecessary intervention.

4.5 The Learning & Development programme adopted by the Scottish Borders delivers a bespoke approach to learning. The rolling programme of standard training sessions is open to all agencies (statutory, independent and third sector) based in the Scottish Borders, and the outcomes are based on the national training programme developed for the Scottish Government. It is acknowledged that it is important for all partners to work together in supporting and protecting adults at risk of harm, and multi-agency training helps to deliver this message to people who may have contact with adults at risk. In 2014-2015, a total of 2,808 people completed training modules including Social Work, Health Care, Police, staff in the Voluntary Sector and Independent Sector.

4.6 Activity – Financial and physical harm continue to be the most prominent types of harm in the Scottish Borders. Work with trading standards last year to tackle financial harm and scams has seen a positive impact on adult protection referrals, particularly in the age range 65 – 79 years of age, as figures are down by a third. Most cases of physical harm happen in the adults own home usually by someone known to them. Reports of physical harm and neglect are also reported in private care home settings. Scottish Borders investigate all incidents of harm in these settings and have now delivered bespoke adult protection training into all 22 care homes within the Scottish Borders. Within the under 65 year age range, social media and smart phone technology is particularly impacting on relationships. Many adults are introduced to a wider group of friends / acquaintances through this technology. However this technology can also be used in some situations, to target and harm our most vulnerable adults.

4.7 Priorities for 2015 – 2016

There are a number of priorities for the Adult Protection Committee:

- (a) Financial harm - Progress has been made in this area. This area continues to feature prominently in the Scottish Borders. Further work is planned through a national media campaign. Adult Protection Committee plan to do some further work with local banks and building societies.
- (b) Client and Carer feedback - Scottish Borders has made progress in securing client and carer feedback and is using this to better inform, service delivery. Scottish Borders are keen to see further improvement and more effective use of advocacy.
- (c) The 2015 – 2017 Adult Protection Committee Business plan covers 16 areas of Adult Protection overview. This will include increased quality assurance and audit function and a review of cases in transition from child to adult services. This plan will take us to further self-evaluation in 2017.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

This report makes an important contribution to the overall management of risks of the Council and the governance of this important area of activity.

5.3 Equalities

It is anticipated there will be no adverse equality implications due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no known effects on economic, social or environmental implications arising from this report.

5.5 Carbon Management

There are no known effects on carbon emissions arising from this report.

5.6 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no known changes required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR, and the Clerk to the Council are being consulted and their comments will be incorporated into the final report.
- 6.2 The Adult Protection Committee and relevant subgroups were consulted.

Approved by

Chief Social Work Officer

Signature Elaine Torrance

Author(s)

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Background Papers: Nil

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Diane Milne can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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